MINISTRY OF SKILLS, TRAINING AND LABOUR
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THE LITERACY MATERIALS

BULLETIN

9

Spring 1994

When the Literacy Materials Committee learned that 1994 was to be the International Year of the Family, we decided it was a great opportunity to seek out and field test fundamental level materials that would be appropriate for family literacy settings. Because the members of our committee do not work in family literacy programs we had to be inventive. We learned to reach out to people in other programs and community agencies for suggestions and opinions on materials, to devise ways to use these materials in our classrooms, and to ask parents who attend our programs to try out some of the books, videos, and manuals we found. It proved to be a challenging yet rewarding experience, and most of this issue is devoted to reviewing family literacy materials.

The materials reviewed in this issue of the *Bulletin* include a manual on family literacy programs, a video about reading to children, a book on communicating with your child's teacher, a parenting program, a resource manual on common childhood illnesses, and a sampling of picture books that our adult learners have enjoyed with their children and on their own. You will also find reviews on a popular novel, a package of spelling resources, two plays, and a reference book on literacy projects in various regions of Canada. We think you will find these materials both intriguing and useful.

Welcome to Jan Sawyer, an instructor at Okanagan, University College in Salmon Arm, who recently joined the Literacy Materials Committee. Maureen Stephens, who has been a part of the committee since 1991, will be leaving the committee after this issue of the *Bulletin*. Maureen has always managed to find 'fun' materials to recommend for use with adult literacy students and recently led a workshop on behalf of the Literacy Materials Committee about innovative and entertaining ways to do book reports at the Literacy B.C. A.G.M. We will miss Maureen's positive energy and cheerful smile at our meetings.

The *Bulletin* was printed by students in the Printing Production Department at Vancouver Community College, City Centre.

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Title:	Learning Together: Family Literacy in Ontario, 1992
Author:	Liza McCoy and Trudy Watts
Publisher:	The Family Literacy Interest Group of Ontario
Available:	The Family Literacy Interest Group, 35 Ellerbeck Street Kingston, ON, K7L 4H5, (613) 549-3657
Price:	free while quantities last and then for cost of printing and mailing
ISBN:	0 9696206 0 8
Level:	Instructor (manual includes plain language summary)
Reviewer:	Helen Thomas

Learning Together: Family Literacy in Ontario
A Resource Manual

Learning Together: Family Literacy in Ontario is an excellent introduction to the principles, approaches, activities and issues of family literacy. It highlights a broad range of activities and approaches used in different settings in Ontario. The manual refers to similar programs in other parts of Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain. The information with some adaptations will transfer easily to B.C.

This well organized manual comes in a binder that has space for adding other articles and your own notes or lesson plans. The type is large and easy to read. The format provides wide margins, effective use of white space, and important points and headings in boldface print.

The family literacy programs discussed in this manual include ones sponsored by and situated in community centres, literacy centres, schools, churches, public health programs and libraries. Some program types are play groups, reading circles, homework clubs, upgrading or literacy programs, kits for new mums, and "Parents as Partners as Learners." One instructor wrote, "It certainly broadened my idea of possible kinds of programs."

The information is especially valuable for those planning to set up their own family literacy group. The plain language summary for learners is clearly written and a good starting point for anyone. I particularly enjoyed the learner statement which is included near the beginning of the binder and again in the learner summary.

> "I've always read to my kids. I couldn't read good but I could pick words out. I'd make my own stories for the kids. But now I can finally find a book I can read . . ."
>
> *Leaner at Open Book*

This resource manual provides program profiles including funding sources and excellent, primarily Canadian, resource lists on a variety of materials and topics related to family literacy. Another useful section for new group leaders is on issues that often arise in family literacy groups. Some of the issues mentioned are: women and poverty, outreach, working in groups, and parenting. Some ideas on how to handle these issues are included Permission is given to photocopy one copy for your own use, so if you know someone with a manual you may copy those parts that interest you.

I would like to recommend *Learning Together* as a practical, informative and Canadian resource manual for anyone interested in family literacy.

Rumball Terrace Reading Circle and MacCormack Court Reading Circle

Address: c/o Margaret Jeanveau
Box 327
Markstay, ON P0M 2G0
(705) 853-4775

Sponsor Organization: An independent grassroots program run by residents and former residents of Ontario Housing.

Contact: Margaret Jeanveau

Funders: Except for an original $200 grant, this group raises all its money through fundraising activities such as bake sales and penny tables. The members also canvass the community for book donations and craft supplies.

Start: The first reading circle and homework club started at Rumball Terrace in February 1991. The second reading circle and club started at MacCormack Court in February 1992.

Location: The homework club and reading circles are held in the recreation rooms of two Ontario Housing apartment buildings.

Goals:

- To provide a place for kids to do their homework and play board games.
- To bring families together to enjoy books.
- To provide a chance for tenants to meet community leaders.
- To encourage children to write and share their own stories.

Program:
The homework clubs meet Monday to Friday after school hours until 6:00 pm. Children bring their homework. A snack is served when the homework is finished. Usually there is time for the children to play board games, which they also bring with them.

Title:	Your Time My Time
Authors:	Ann Walsh
Publisher:	Press Porcépic, 1984
Available:	Porcépic books Limited, 4252 Commerce Circle, Victoria B.C. V8Z 4M2
Price:	$7.95 (paperback)
ISBN:	0 88878 219 5
Level:	high functional/independent
Reviewer:	Iris Strong

Your Time My Time

Your Time My time is a wonderful story! Written by B.C. author Ann Walsh, it is set in Wells and Barkerville, B.C. It begins in 1980 when Elizabeth Connell, a fifteen year old girl, is forced to move with her mother from the city of Vancouver to small, hot, dusty, boring Wells. While her mother "finds herself" after separating from her father, Elizabeth is lonely, bored and depressed. Searching for something to do, she visits the graveyard at historical Barkerville, and finds a ring which transports her back to 1870, where she meets seventeen year old Steve, with whom she falls in love.

The precise descriptions and discerning dialogue make this a great story for any reading level to enjoy hearing, but students who read at the grade six level can manage it independently. The 156 pages are separated into twenty-three chapters, and the print is fairly large for ease in reading. Much action and suspense keep the reader (or listener) anxious to continue, and there is plenty of reference to previous action to refresh the memory when a chapter stop is made.

Character depiction is excellent, and students enjoy identifying sometimes with the mother and sometimes with the daughter in their struggles. There is great opportunity for insight into the opposing personalities and also for discussions regarding the roles.

The language is rich and makes use of effective, precise adjectives and informative adverbs. Descriptions are almost poetic. "Small dust motes danced in the streams of sunlight that found their way between the branches of the trees, dappling the thick grass and moss with spots of gold." (page 153)

The contrasts described in clothing and manner of speech between 1870 and 1980 are wonderful! They provide a beautiful history lesson as well as motivation for paragraph writing, sketches, further research, skits, oral presentation, etc.

All students who were surveyed loved this novel; both male and female, ages seventeen to forty-five were keen to read or hear another Ann Walsh book. Typical comments were: "I wish I could be Elizabeth and have those experiences " I identify with her because she never gives up and neither do I!" "I just want to keep on reading!" "I wish I could write like that!" "You' re not going to stop THERE are you?" "May I read it over again?" "Can we get the next one?"

In class or out, this book comes highly recommended!

from the future and I only hope I can get back there."

Steven looked her up and down slowly, taking in the faded bluejeans, the old T-shirt and baseball cap. "Well, you *are* dressed differently, more like a boy than a girl." He shook his head. "No. I don't believe it. That's like one of those stories that the French author, Jules Verne, writes. Please, Elizabeth. Let me take you home. I think you're ill and don't realize it."

"It's true, it's true! Look, I was sitting under this tree here. . . ."

Steven looked around, puzzled, but Elizabeth continued, ignoring his confusion at her mention of the missing tree. "I was looking at the sun reflecting in my ring and—"

"That ring!" Steven interrupted. "Please let me see it."

She held out her hand, showing him the gold ring.

"That's my ring," he said. He reached for it hesitantly, and Elizabeth quickly withdrew her hand.

"I've been looking everywhere for it," he explained. "That's why I came to the graveyard today. I thought I might have dropped it the last time I visited my sister's grave. It was her ring and before she died she gave it to me. I carry it in my pocket all the time. Please may I have it back? That ring is all I have left of her. Please. Please give it back to me."

He reached out again. Elizabeth felt a wave of sympathy for this tall, gangly boy who cared so deeply for his lost sister.

"Sure," she said gently. "I'd be glad to give it back to you." She pulled at the ring, but it was stuck. She tried loosening it by turning it on her finger.

Suddenly, Steven was gone, swept away in the thick mist along with the new gravestones and the treeless hillside. Again, her head ached behind her eyes and her stomach churned. As soon as the sick feeling passed, she found herself back in the familiar 1980 cemetery.

The tall pine tree stood guard over the anonymous

Title:	Sneezes and Diseases: A Resource Book for Caregivers
Publisher:	Vancouver Health Department, 1993
Available:	Forms Coordinator, Vancouver Health Department 1060-West 8th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V6H 1C4, (604) 736-2033
Price:	$15
Level:	functional
Reviewer:	Katie Molloy

Sneezes and Diseases
A Resource Manual for Caregivers

Sneezes and Diseases is a resource manual about common childhood diseases, published by the Vancouver Health Department and adapted in plain language by Laurie Gould. It was designed for use in child care centers, but it would be useful for all parents, caregivers and literacy programs to have this manual on hand. Much of the information was adapted from "Wellbeings", a publication of the Canadian Pediatric society. The format is an extremely user friendly three ringed binder.

Sneezes and Diseases is written and illustrated with clarity, empathy, and above all, with qualified instructions on common things parents can do when their children are sick.

The index/table of contents is well laid out and easy to skim through.

The introduction contains important telephone numbers, and an illustrated "Quick Check" page indicating symptoms of illness in your child. An easy to use Rash Flow Chart describing the symptoms to look for and a checklist of the possible causes of the rash, is also included.

The "Facts About" segment in Section 1 is simple and well organized. Facts about eighteen common childhood diseases are given with a highlighted "Things Parents Can Do" section following.

Section 2, "Preventing Communicable Diseases" gives information on ways germs are spread, good health practices everyone should follow and interesting information on handwashing routines for children.

"Teaching Resources" are contained in Section 3. This part gives some clearly defined teaching objectives to help acquaint children with matters of health and medical equipment. An added bonus is the inclusion of art activities, action songs, suggested children's books and additional resources.

The appendix should not be missed! It includes a list of diseases that must be reported and an immunization schedule, opposite which lies a clear page protector, into which one can put the child's pertinent medical information.

This is an extremely useful package. It is attractive and easy to use. Parents and all people working with children will appreciate its simplicity.

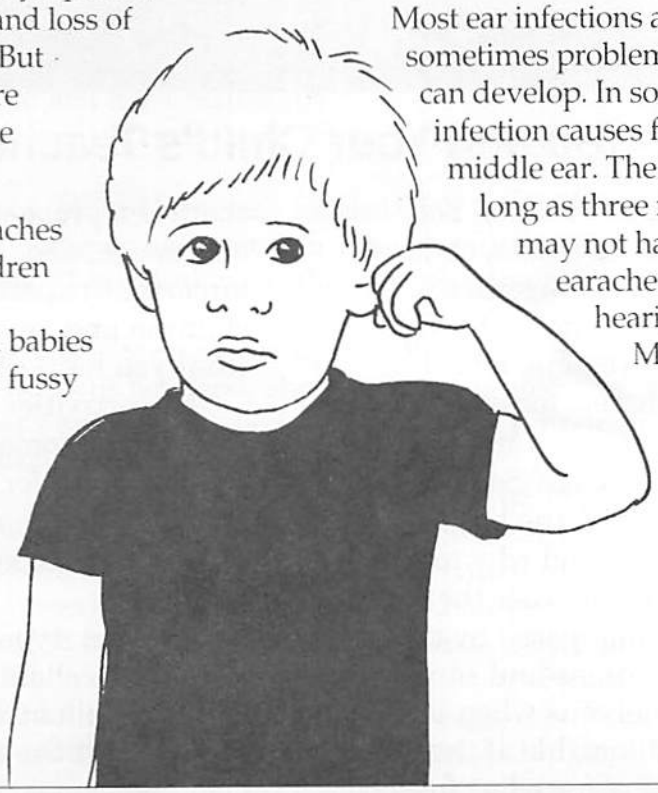
Facts About Ear Infections (Otitis Media)

Ear infections are very common in children. Most children will have at least one before they are 3 years of age.

An ear infection usually comes after a cold. They have many of the same symptoms, such as a mild to high fever and loss of interest in eating or playing. But unlike colds, ear infections are caused by bacteria and can be treated with antibiotics.

Ear infections also cause earaches and colds do not. Older children can tell you if they have an earache. Young children and babies may just become cranky and fussy or cry more than usual.

Doctors usually treat children's ear infections with antibiotics. There are many different antibiotics that work well. The antibiotic should make the child feel better within 2 or 3 days. But, to make sure the infection is completely gone, it is very important to give the child all of the antibiotic. The doctor may also suggest a painkiller such as acetaminophen (Tylenol™, Tempra™, Panadol™ and others).



Most ear infections are not serious but sometimes problems such as hearing loss can develop. In some children, the ear infection causes fluid to collect in the middle ear. The fluid may last for as long as three months but the child may not have a fever or an earache. However, the child's hearing may be affected. Most children get better without any medical treatment. Others may need medicine or tubes in their ears to correct the problem.

Things Parents Can Do

- Call your doctor if you think your child has an ear infection. Your doctor will need to look into your child's ears to see if they are infected.
- Remember that ear infections usually get better with antibiotics, but it is important to take all of the medicine prescribed by the doctor.
- Call the doctor if your child:
  - has an earache that becomes worse even though the doctor has treated it.
  - has a high fever over 39° C (102° F) or a fever that lasts more than three days.
  - is very cranky or fussy or cries more than usual.
  - is very sleepy.
  - has a skin rash.
  - has trouble breathing, or breathes very quickly.
  - has trouble hearing.

Children with ear infections may come to the child care center if they feel well enough to take part in the activites.

Title:	You and Your Child's Teacher
Author:	Pamela Weinberg
Publisher:	New Readers Press, 1990
Available:	Laubach Literacy of Canada, P.O. Box 6548, Station "A" St. John, N.B. E2L 4R9, (506)634-1980, fax 634-0944 In B.C. call Artel Educational Resources 1-800-665-9255
Price:	$11
ISBN:	0 88336 627 4
Level:	functional and independent
Reviewer:	Helen Thomas

You and Your Child's Teacher

The main message of *You and Your Child's Teacher* is that "Parents, children and teachers need to work together to make a child's education the best." This book is at a functional reading level but the information is valuable for any parent. Students at a basic level can read it with the help of a tutor or teacher. Some of the most useful information in the book is advice about how, when, and why to phone the teacher, write a note or visit the school.

I was particularly impressed by the sample phone conversations and sample notes. Any parent is nervous when phoning a teacher about a problem, but if the parent stays calm and plans what to say, a phone call can solve many problems quickly. Learners frequently ask for advice about how to write notes to a teacher. The two examples in this book can provide a pattern to follow that can easily be adjusted to different needs. Looking at the sample note, parents can realize how short the note can be and, in fact, should be.

You and Your Child's Teacher suggests going to school to meet the teacher, see your child's classroom, attend parent-teacher conferences, concerts and so on as frequently as possible, not just when there is a problem. Their advice for how to proceed and think things through when there is a problem is excellent. There are also suggestions for organizing the important papers for each of your children and keeping a diary to record what you have done and when.

The activities the book outlines for learning at home are inexpensive and should be fun for younger children. The positive and constructive "ABCs of How to work with teachers" are useful for everyone.

The font, type size and use of white space is excellent in this book. The black and white illustrations are attractive and complement the text. They show both men and women of various races carrying out the ideas suggested in the book. The text is clear and effectively written in plain language. The table of contents in this well organized book allows you to find the information you want quickly. Although this is an American book, the ideas and information are just as applicable to Canada and there was nothing in the text to indicate its American origin.

The learners who read *You and Your Child's Teacher* recommend it to others. One student wrote, "I like how it outlined the steps. How to implement them for use by you and the teacher."

Absence note

When your child misses school, the school needs to know why. You will need to write an absence note. Remember to include these key facts:

1. date
2. greeting
3. child's name
4. date of absence
5. reason for absence
6. closing
7. your signature

1 May 3, 1990

2 Dear Mr. Franklin:

My daughter, 3 Angela Cleary, was absent on 4 May 2 5 because she had a fever and an earache.

6 Sincerely,

7 Donna Cleary

Practice writing your own note.

1 _____

2 _____:

3 4 5 _____

_____

_____

6 _____,

7 _____

Title:	Why Seals Blow Their Noses: Canadian Wildlife in Fact & Fiction
Author:	Diane Swanson
Publisher:	Whitecap Books, 1992
Available:	Whitecap Books Ltd., (604) 980-9852 fax (604) 980-8197 1086 West 3rd St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7P 3J6,
Price:	$10.95
Level:	functional
Reviewer:	Sylvia Doherty

Why Seals Blow Their Noses
Canadian Wildlife In Fact & Fiction

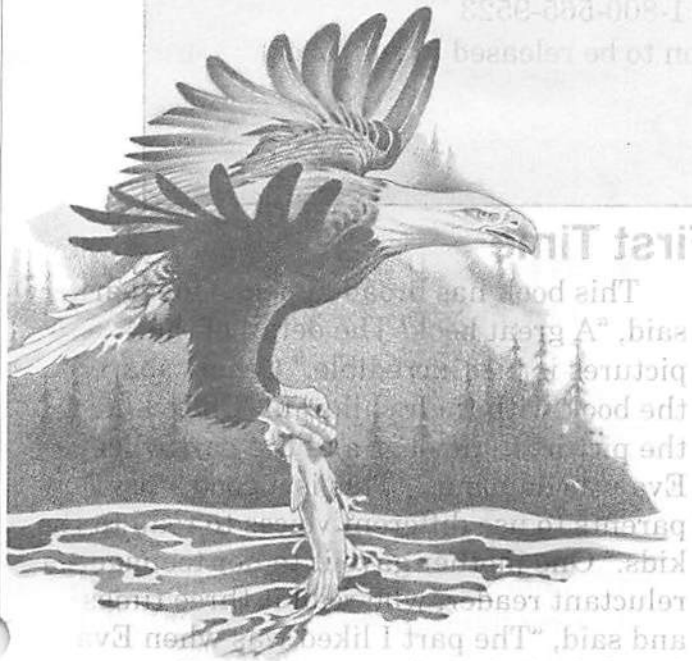
In keeping with our family focus for this bulletin, we have field tested four children's books, on the premise that reading to children provides an excellent opportunity to improve and gain confidence in one's own reading skills. The two-fold benefit is that it also sets a positive example to the children and establishes reading as a priority in the home – a priority that reaps rewards in the children's success at school. As well, reading to one's children can establish a regular block of hard-to-find quality time, anticipated eagerly by the children, where they can receive the parent's undivided attention. This activity promotes an excellent atmosphere for discussion about the books and communication in general.

Many adults find, once they overcome the attitude that it is demeaning to read a 'kid's book', that excellent children's books abound in an infinite variety of themes and interests from which both adults and children can gain great enjoyment. Good children's literature is often superior in both writing and art work to much of the mediocre offerings for adult learners and can provide the reader with a richer and more satisfying reading experience.

Why Seals Blow Their Noses, the first of the four children's books we have chosen to review, is a collection of facts, delightful stories, and legends from many cultures about ten wild animals of Canada. It is illustrated throughout with a unique combination of lifelike and lighthearted drawings reflecting the juxtaposition of informative script with humorous legends. This book entertains while it informs, stimulating children's imaginations and promoting discussion. We learn that animals are amazing; there are snorkeling grizzly bears, tobogganing ravens and seals that blow balloons through their noses. Most of the stories are very short to accommodate children with short attention spans. The author, illustrator, and research consultants are all from British Columbia, so it has a uniquely local focus.

Learners reported that their children found the books interesting and chose favorite stories and pictures: one child like the story about the owl best, another had a favorite picture to which she'd keep referring. The parents were pleased that the book was about Canada and "made in Canada."

Children's Books reviews continued page 12



Special see-through eyelids protect the eyes from dust and bright sunshine.

Its strong, hooked beak is great for tearing food into pieces.

A wading bald eagle may also use its beak to grab salmon that are laying and fertilizing eggs in streams.

Its big, strong feet and sharp, curved claws snatch and kill animals. Because the bald eagle eats lots of slippery fish, the soles of its feet are covered with rough scales. They improve the eagle's grip.

Eagles often hunt alone, but sometimes they work together. One may distract an animal while the other attacks it from behind. Or one eagle may swoop down on an animal, making it run towards the other eagle.

Sometimes, eagles hunt like pirates. They snatch fish away from other birds or scare them into dropping their catch.

Why Eagles See Well

An eagle was asked to fly to the top of a tall tree so it could watch for war canoes. That way it could warn the village of danger. But the eagle couldn't see well—not like the snail.

So the eagle told the snail: "You must trade eyes with me so I can help the village."

"Alright," agreed the snail. "But you must bring my eyes back."

The eagle flew to the tree and looked out—far, far across the water. Soon he spotted a war canoe and warned the chief at once.

When the trouble had passed, the eagle flew down from the tree, and the snail demanded its eyes back. But the eagle decided to keep them forever. And that's why snails move so slowly today, and eagles see so well.

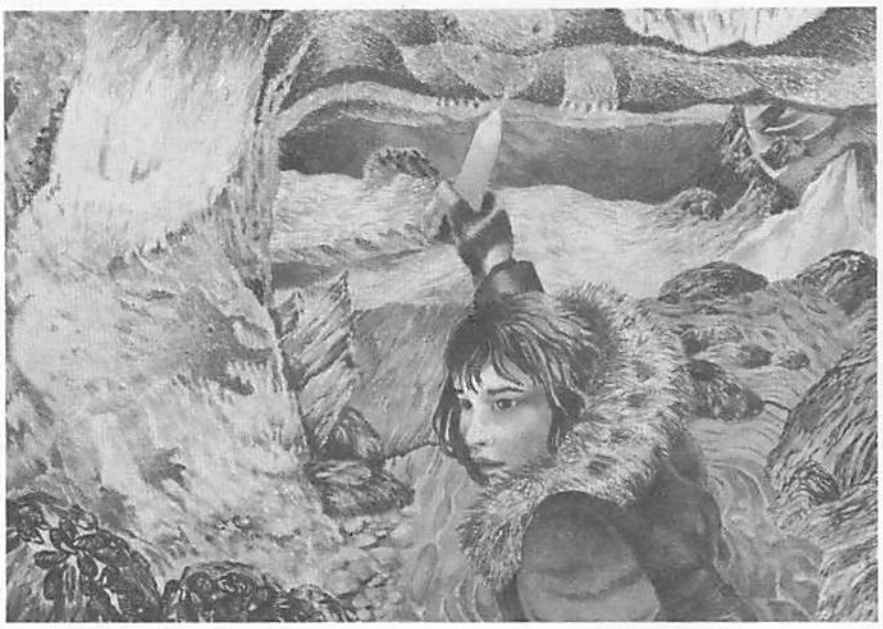
—a story from the Kwakwaka'wakw (formerly called the Kwakiutl) of Canada

Title:	Very Last First Time
Author:	Jan Andrews
Illustrator:	Ian Wallace
Publisher:	Groundwood/Douglas &MacIntyre
Available:	Douglas &MacIntyre Ltd., 1615 Venables St., V5L 2H1 Vancouver, B.C., 1-800-667-6902 fax 1-800-263-9099 Manitoba & east call 1-800-565-9523
Price:	$12.95 hardcover (soon to be released in softcover)
ISBN:	0-88899-043-X
Level:	basic and functional
Reviewer:	Sylvia Doherty

Very Last First Time

Very Last First Time presents us with a unique perspective on Canadian culture, that of the Inuit people of northern Canada. In great detail, the first few pages of illustrations accurately and sensitively portray the life-style of a northern community. This book then allows us to experience, through a young girl's adventure, the incredible practice of going under the sea ice in winter when the tide is out to collect mussels from the rocks. We travel with her down through the hole in the ice into the nether world darkness. Everywhere she sees fantastic sea monsters and shadow shapes in the candle lit ice formations, wet stones, pools and seaweed. The intelligent, poetic style of text and imaginative and inspired illustrations complement each other to create a multi-sensory feast. We are drawn into Eva's world and we share her elation at this spectacular first-time experience, her joy at being alone, her wonder at the dazzling sights, sounds and tactile sensations, then panic and dread at the loss of her candle, and finally relief as she finds her way back and dances in joyous abandon under the circle of moonlight.

This book has broad appeal. One learner said, "A great book! The detail of the pictures is just incredible." Others shared the book with their children: "Cheryl liked the pictures, the dogs and the part where Eva was dancing." "This is a good story for parents to use different voices to read to the kids." One mother gave it to her teenager, a reluctant reader, who read it three times and said, "The part I liked was when Eva found the hole and came out safe."



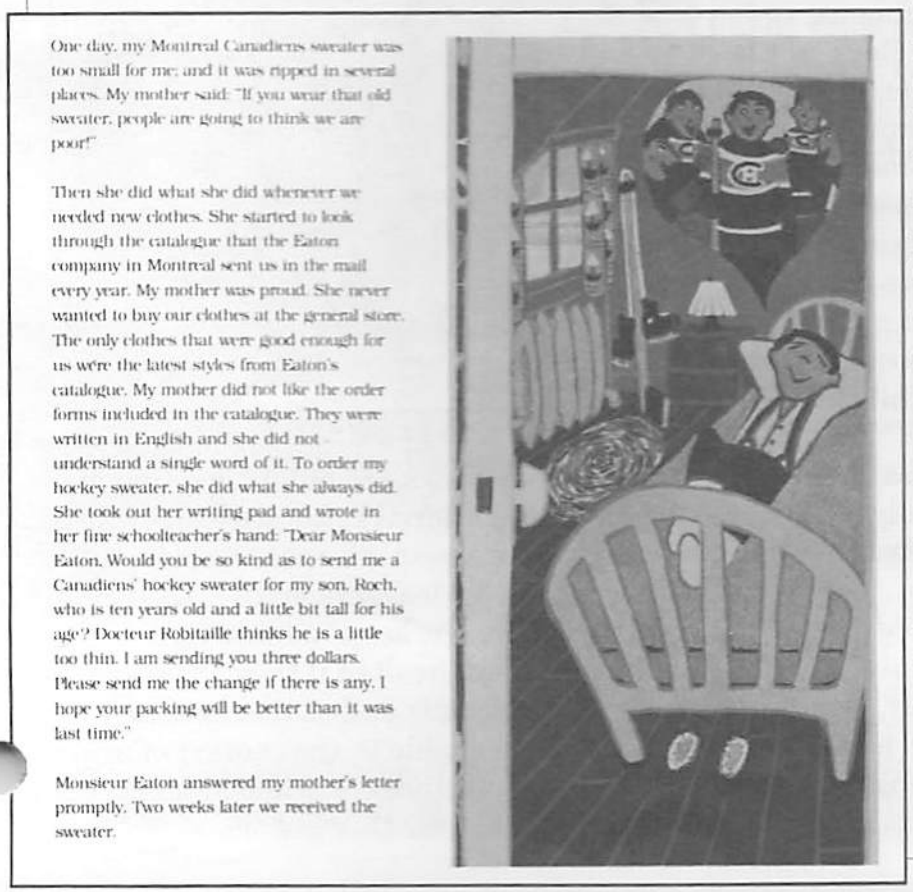
In a minute, she was standing on the seabed.
Above her, in the ice hole, the wind whistled. Eva struck a match and lit a candle. The gold-bright flame shone and glistened on the wet stones and pools at her feet.

Title:	The Hockey Sweater
Author:	Roch Carrier translated by Sheila Fischman
Illustrator:	Sheldon Cohen
Publisher:	Tundra Books
Available:	at your local bookstore or Tundra Books, Montreal, Que.
Price:	$6.95 softcover (also available in hardcover)
ISBN:	0-88776 176 3
Level:	functional
Reviewer:	Sylvia Doherty

The Hockey Sweater

The *Hockey Sweater* was first translated from the French in 1979 and published in a book of short stories by Roch Carrier. This more recent edition of the popular story began as an internationally acclaimed animated film in 1980 and became an instant classic when it was published in picture book form, four years later. The delightful story is set in small town Quebec in the 1940's where young boys' lives revolve around school, church and the skating rink. It is narrated in a straightforward first person voice and chronicles a disastrous boyhood episode wherein a Toronto Maple Leaf sweater is sent to a young Montreal Canadiens fan by mistake and he is forced to wear it.

The story appeals to all ages and has been used successfully in the classroom with both beginning and advanced students. The brilliantly coloured pictures are filled with action, emotion and details of the era. There is instant identification with this quintessential Canadian sports story, but many other themes present themselves: childhood, Quebec, Canadian culture, writing, church, changes between generations. One student's children said, "The mother should be more concerned about her son's feelings and not about the company. She paid money to get the sweater," which prompted a discussion about attitudes in 'olden days' versus now. A young male adult student said, "I would give this book 4 stars out of 5. I like books about sports and people's lives in other places." Another remarked, "My nephew liked the colourful pictures."



One day, my Montreal Canadiens sweater was too small for me; and it was ripped in several places. My mother said: "If you wear that old sweater, people are going to think we are poor!"

Then she did what she did whenever we needed new clothes. She started to look through the catalogue that the Eaton company in Montreal sent us in the mail every year. My mother was proud. She never wanted to buy our clothes at the general store. The only clothes that were good enough for us were the latest styles from Eaton's catalogue. My mother did not like the order forms included in the catalogue. They were written in English and she did not understand a single word of it. To order my hockey sweater, she did what she always did. She took out her writing pad and wrote in her fine schoolteacher's hand: "Dear Monsieur Eaton, Would you be so kind as to send me a Canadiens' hockey sweater for my son, Roch, who is ten years old and a little bit tall for his age? Docteur Robitaille thinks he is a little too thin. I am sending you three dollars. Please send me the change if there is any. I hope your packing will be better than it was last time."

Monsieur Eaton answered my mother's letter promptly. Two weeks later we received the sweater.

Title:	Crow Boy
Author:	Taro Yashima
Publisher:	Picture Puffin/Penguin Books Canada Ltd.
Available:	at your local bookstore or Penguin Books Canada Ltd. 10 Alcorn Ave., Toronto Ontario, M4V 3B2
Price:	$5.99
ISBN:	0 14 050172-X
Level:	basic
Reviewer:	Sylvia Doherty

Crow Boy

Our final children's book review is of the old favourite, *Crow Boy*. This is the poignant story of a strange, shy, small boy who is isolated by his differences from the other children in the school. The setting is in Japan, but the situation is common to every culture. As the story unfolds, we learn how Chibi, or Tiny Boy, as he was known, earns his bolder name of Crow Boy, and his own unique identity with his classmates and the larger community.

Adults and children were unanimous; they really liked this story: "Crow Boy was a great book. I liked it when he was on stage and was doing all those crow voices." "I would recommend this book to students older and younger than me."

This story presents a powerful message; it affirms the idea that we all have something to offer. One learner summed it up with, "I think this book could show a lesson to the young children not to make fun of people."

Some people thought the illustrations weren't very good while others really liked them. One learner's child "liked Chibi's drawings, and she liked his raincoat which was made from dried zebra grass." A bigger typeface would have made reading easier. However, this book was definitely a hit and could be a valuable awareness and learning tool when exploring the theme of tolerance.

Every one of us cried, thinking how much we had been wrong to Chibi all those long years.

Sample pages 12,13 & 14 are 50% of original size

These four books are but a sampling of the wealth of children's literature, and we encourage you to explore more from this resource both for learners and for their children. However, keep in mind that adults are often insulted if they are given children's materials and so it is best to make these available in the context of a family literacy activity or when students can choose books for themselves.

Title:	Reading to Your Children: A video program for parents of preschoolers & children in primary grades
Produced:	Curriculum Associates.
Available:	Curriculum Associates, Inc., 5 Esquire Road, N. Billerica, MA 01862, 1-800-225-0248
Price:	$99 US
ISBN:	1-55- 915- 42- 009
Reviewer:	Brenda Giles

Reading To Your Children

Brenda Giles is an Adult Basic Education student at Vancouver Community College, a member of the Literacy Materials Committee, and a parent who is determined to help her son learn to love reading.

This video is about six secrets for teaching your children to read. The first secret is to be a model to your children by reading recipes, cereal boxes, menus, pictures, grandma's letter, or using the phone book. This will let them see you think reading is important. The second secret is to build a background of experience and knowledge for reading. Look for beautiful sounds and colours in things around you at home, in the neighborhood, or in a special place. The third secret is choosing a time and place to read: a doctor's office, before school, snack time, potty training, bedtime or at the bus stop. Read to each other or just read together in the same room. The fourth secret is to select books at the library, second-hand stores, or grocery stores, but to remember to select reading material children like.

The fifth secret is to share books. For example, talk about the cover. Predict what is going to happen in the book.

The sixth secret is to extend the reading experience. When reading, run your finger along the words. Reread the book and leave out a word for the child to say. Talk about the time, place and characters of the story with your children. Act them out or emphasize what the character says. The video also gives hints for people who are beginning readers or learning English as a second language: listen to taped books with your children, ask them to read to you. The video has many more ideas for helping your children become interested in reading.

One instructor thought the video presented "a thorough discussion of how, why, what, when and where to read with children in an organized, well-paced, visually attractive, and easy to understand way." Another said, "An enjoyable video that re-affirms basic approaches to helping your children become interested in reading."

Students liked it because, "It showed how to read together when children are very small," and it explained, "how to help children learn to read and remember." In addition, it "showed how reading is the foundation of learning and future communication with your child."

Title:	Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program
Publisher:	Minister of National Health and Welfare in cooperation with the Departments of Health in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador, 1989
Available:	Canada Communication Group Publishing, Ottawa, Canada K1A 0S9. 1-800-561-4334, fax (819) 994-1498
Price:	Parenting Resource Kit $17 (includes 5 booklets @ $5.25, growth/development charts, sticker) Contact Canada Communication for list of all *Nobody's Perfect* materials
Level:	Parent booklets - basic and functional
Reviewer:	Laurie Gould

Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program

I encourage my students to bring books to class to recommend to their classmates. Over the years, a number have brought in booklets from a *Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program* and made comments like: "These books have information all parents need to know." "They are easy to read." "You can use the pictures to find what you want." "It showed me how to take care of my baby." "I am a new parent with no support, no family. I want to help my little girl. Sometimes traditional ways are different than new ways. I like to learn new ways." "I feel different every time I read them. As my child grows I find more information."

The students had been given the five booklets free of charge when they participated in a *Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program*. This national program is usually implemented through provincial governments or community agencies. It was introduced to B.C. in 1988 by a joint effort of the provincial ministries of Health and Social Services and the federal Health Promotion Directorate and is presently available in 85 communities in B.C. The local Health Unit generally knows where a program is available in any community.

Nobody's Perfect is designed for parents with children under the age of five and is targeted to parents with one or more of the following characteristics:
•single • young •limited formal education •low income •geographically, socially or linguistically isolated.

The program employs high quality materials for parents and facilitators. The parent booklets are practical, clearly written and easy to read, understand and use. "Body" explains normal growth, maintaining health and recognizing illness. "Safety" provides information on accident prevention and first aid. "Mind" describes the social, emotional and intellectual development of children. "Behaviour" offers a problem-solving method for handling common behaviour problems. "Parents" talks about ways in which parents can meet their own needs as well as those of their children. Although it is possible to order the books directly, it is highly recommended that they be distributed as part of a *Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program* conducted by a trained facilitator.

The comprehensive Leader's Guide and Training Manual emphasize a participant-centered approach and a philosophy which affirms that each parent brings rich experiences and feelings to the group that contribute to their own learning and the learning of others' .

Nobody's Perfect Parenting Programs meet the needs of many literacy learners in their role as parents.

From Parent's Book, *Nobody's Perfect Program,* Health Canada, 1989

38 Tantrums

What's Happening Here?

If my child gets angry, or doesn't get her way, she has a tantrum.

Why Is It Happening?

A tantrum is a way of working off anger. Tantrums usually start when a child is about 2 years old. She becomes angry and frustrated when she can't get what she wants, or is asked to do something she doesn't want to do. Tantrums are most common when a child is tired or rushed.

What Can I Do?

- Stay calm. Don't let the child hurt herself or anyone else. Stay quietly nearby until she calms down.
- Don't give in or try to reason. Pay as little attention as possible during the tantrum.
- If your child has a tantrum in a public place, take her to a quiet place and wait till she calms down.

What If It Doesn't Work?

If your child has a lot of tantrums, check to be sure that you are not rewarding this behaviour by paying too much attention to it. If you are concerned, ask your doctor, public health nurse or mental health worker for advice.

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Title:	On Stage: A Reader's Theater Collection–The Last Job & The Case of the Missing Payroll
Author:	Jack Warner
Publisher:	Steck -Vaughn,1992
Available:	McClelland & Stewart Inc,380 Esna Drive, Markham, ON L3R 1H5, 1-800-268 5707 fax (416) 940-8864
Price:	$14.95 for 10 copies of one play
ISBN:	0 8114-6020 7 The Case of the Missing Payroll 0 8114-6019 3 The Last Job
Level:	ranges from basic to functional
Reviewer:	Yana Sabanskis and Laurie Gould

On Stage: The Case of the Missing Payroll & The Last Job

The Case of the Missing Payroll and *The Last Job are* two short plays in Steck-Vaughn's "A Readers' Theater Collection." In *The Case of the Missing Payroll* Ann and Ken West hire lawyer Laura Greer to defend them on theft charges. When Laura manages to dig up new evidence in their favor the story takes a surprising turn. *The Last Job* is based on O. Henry's story about Jimmy Valentine, an inveterate safecracker who decides to reform after falling in love with the bank manager's daughter, Annabel. But when Annabel's niece is trapped in the bank vault, Jimmy has a hard decision to make.

Both storylines are believable and appropriate for adult audiences. The plays are long enough to generate enthusiasm for the story, but short enough so that students do not lose interest. Students like the surprise endings. The reading level of the parts varies and so by matching student abilities with appropriate parts, the plays are accessible to most literacy students. Printing is a good size and there is plenty of white space. The plays come bundled in packages of 10 and are relatively inexpensive.

Reading a play is often a novel activity for an adult literacy group. One instructor remarked, "We really had fun with this." Another pointed out that, "Most literacy students would never have been 'chosen' to be in a play, so the whole concept, under the right circumstances could be great."

From a reading point-of-view the play format provides much practice and repetition in a purposeful setting. Literacy students often feel unconfident about oral reading, but participating in reading a play out loud seems to be less threatening. They also seem more able to venture predictions and motivated to make inferences when they are engaged in playing a character. In addition, the play format provides a good opportunity to discuss the elements of characterization, setting, plot, and theme.

A number of interesting writing activities can also grow out of play reading including composing a descriptive paragraph on the setting of a particular scene or writing an extra act.

Try these plays out; we think you'll enjoy them.

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Try these plays out; we think you'll enjoy them.

Jeremy: Don't waste your time on those two, Laura. This is an open-and-shut case if I ever saw one. Believe me.

Narrator: Laura Greer turns and walks out. She stops to think in the hall outside the courtroom.

Greer: *(To herself)* Well, what now, Laura Greer? *(Pauses)* Well, why not start with the Wests? After all, they're right downstairs in the lockup.

Act Two

Narrator: Laura finds the sergeant in charge of the lockup. She is led to the holding cell where the Wests are.

Laura: Mr. and Mrs. West, I know this is hard on you both. But I want you to know I'm not giving up, and I hope you don't either. Now, I'd like to ask you a few more questions.

Ken: Go right ahead, Ms. Greer.

Laura: Good. Now, is there anything you can add to your testimony, Mr. West?

Ken: I told everything I know in court. And everything I said is true. I did open that safe on Friday but only to check on the

On Stage

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Titles:	The Spelling Pack
Publisher:	ALBSU (Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit), 1988
Available:	Avanti Books, 8 Parson Green, Boulton Road, Pin Green Industrial Estate, Stevenage, Eng. SG1 4QG, phone 011 44438 350155, fax 011 44438 741131
Price:	£ 5.25
ISBN:	1 870741 01 3
Level:	all levels
Reviewer:	Maureen Stephens

The Spelling Pack

From the makers of The *Starter Pack* comes *The Spelling Pack.* This package of ideas, exercises, discussions and comments provides a broad range of materials to help tutors, students and instructors tackle specific problems and issues in spelling. The *Pack* comes in a plastic folder with 83 slip out pages. It is well organized and user friendly making it easy to choose an activity or exercise about whatever area of spelling needs to be worked on.

The Spelling Pack is not a sequential program or spelling course, but rather an idea generator. The reading level of the *Pack* is high for some fundamental level students but the ideas and exercises can be adapted or read orally. Some students will be able to choose individual sheets for independent study.

The *Pack* is divided into two sections. Section one has discussion and activity material plus practice worksheets and helpful advice, all based on the premise that work on spelling should relate to other activities, i.e. work on spelling should be to avoid making mistakes in writing and/or to make writing more accessible to others, etc. The materials in Section two are designed to provide examples of certain approaches to particular spelling problems that can be applied and adapted for other work on spelling.

The Spelling Pack helps students take responsibility for their own spelling program. In one fundamental classroom students worked on the section titled, "Analyzing Spelling Words." They used the ideas in the *Pack* to create cards for analyzing their individual errors. Students said that they "really feel in control."

Throughout the *Pack* there are stimulating discussion sections. For example, the section titled, "The Things People Say About Spelling," would be an effective tool in tutor training. Tutors are given statements on file cards like, "People who make spelling mistakes are lazy," or "Using a dictionary is cheating," or "Educated people spell well." These statements encourage tutors to examine their own attitudes and myths about spelling.

Every literacy program would find *The Spelling Pack* an excellent source of material. Although it was designed for tutors who prepare work for individual students or small groups, and for tutor trainers preparing spelling workshops, it is also invaluable for fundamental and intermediate instructors looking for new twists in spelling strategies. ALBSU has produced another winner with *The Spelling Pack*

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Analysing your Spelling

Some Common Types of Spelling Error

Sample Page

Type of Error	*Example*	*Tips*
Right sound but wrong letters	menshun – **mention**	★ keep lists of similarly spelt words ★ look at them regularly
Didn't apply a spelling rule	comeing-**coming** (drop the 'e')	★ get to know which rules you need to learn or which you often forget.
missing letters extra letters	becase – **because** everery – **every**	★ highlight or mark the parts which you get confused with.
Wrong word	two much work **too**	★ use memory hooks (mnemonics) to help and learn each word separately.
Reversed letters	Firday – **Friday**	★ Look at the difficult parts of the word and sound them out or underline them.
spelt the way you speak accent/dialect	somefing – **something** flim – **film**	★ Keep lists of your typical errors and know your weak spots.

Use this chart to record some of your own spelling mistakes.

You may prefer to design your own chart for analysing errors.

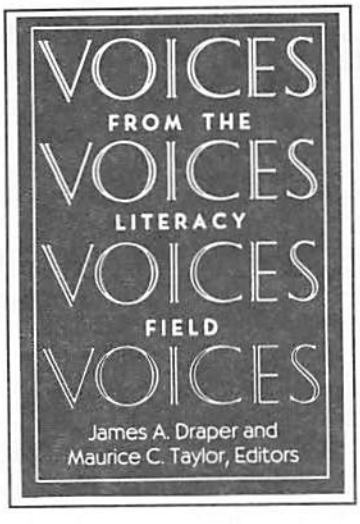
Wrong spelling	*Correct spelling*	*Why it was wrong and how you can learn or remember it*

Title:	Voices from the Literacy Field
Editors:	James A. Draper and Maurice C. Taylor
Publisher:	Culture Concepts Inc.
Available:	5 Darlingbrook Cresent, Toronto, Ontario, M9A 3H4 (416) 231-1692, fax (416) 237-1832
ISBN:	0 921472 10 2
Price:	$34.95
Level:	Instructor/tutor reference
Reviewer:	Yana Sabanskis

Voices from the Literacy Field

This book is a compilation of articles related to adult literacy in Canada that range from philosophy to training programmes for literacy practitioners, programmes for special needs student and case studies on community building, student participation and work place literacy.

The first section of the book, "Foundations of Literacy", is most useful in helping adult educators define a basis for their role in education. It offers a variety of philosophical orientations in adult education and within each philosophy defines the role of student, teacher and methodology. It also discusses the link between literacy practices with adult education principles and defines the underlying structure of the steps of the learning process.



In the first chapter, James Draper states that,

> "The first task of an educational program . . . is to revive individual self-esteem and dignity. Only then can education provide an open door to learning."

Draper also states that an, "effective educator is able to orchestrate all the variables of a literacy program without losing sight of the overall goal of holistic human development."

Each chapter offers some reflection of how this may be accomplished, either by actual case studies or by presenting the historical development of a variety of successful programs in different communities across Canada, notably in Manitoba and Ontario. And it demonstrates the vital role of library literacy programmes by helping to integrate learners, particularly those with disabilities, into the community.

Many of the chapters end with a series of questions relating to the chapter, and these often serve to involve the readers and question their own theories.

This book is an excellent reference text for adult educators. It may serve the seasoned educator as a'check and balance' for one's own methodology, and for the new educator, it offers a sound basis for developing one's own philosophy, style and role in a student-centered curriculum.

The Bulletin's Board

You Make it Happen for Your Family!: A Read-Aloud Guide for Parents

This 20-page guide, produced as part of a community outreach project initiated by Pacific Coast Public Television, is written in plain language and meant to be "encouraging to those who might feel uncomfortable reading aloud to their children or uneasy about approaching librarians and bookstore sales clerks for assistance." For a free copy contact *Take Action for Education*, Pacific Coast Public Television Association, Suite 1300 - 666 Burrard Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6C 3J8, Tel. (604) 685-7375

Linking Partners in Literacy: A Model for Local Professional Development

Vicky Austin of Project Literacy Victoria has put together a comprehensive plain language manual on the process of researching, planning and delivering Professional Development workshops for literacy workers in the Greater Victoria Region. The manual is readable, well organized and thorough. If you are planning professional development activities for your community, you may find this publication useful. For ordering information contact *Project Literacy Victoria*, 830 E. Pembroke Street,Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4, Tel.(604) 381-3755 or fax 381-4911

The Family Literacy Interest Group Of Ontario

This group publishes a newsletter called *Family Ties* and during the International Year of the Family they plan to distribute six issues free of charge. If your are interested in receiving or contributing to the newsletter contact *The Family Literacy Interest Group*, 35 Ellerbeck Street, Kingston, ON K7L 4H5 Tel. or fax (613) 549-3657

Circulating Materials:

The materials reviewed in this *Bulletin* are available on a loan basis for a period of one month. If you wish to borrow any of them, please contact *Literacy B.C.* Suite 1122, 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8 Tel. (604)687-5077 or fax (604) 687-5076

Mailing List & Permanent Collection:

If you would like to be added to the *Literacy Materials Bulletin* mailing list or want to order back copies, please contact the Adult Literacy Contact Centre.The A.L.C.C. also has a complete and permanent set of materials from all nine Bulletins available for viewing at the *Adult Literacy Contact Centre*, Suite 622, 510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1L8, Tel. 684-0624 in the Lower Mainland, 1-800-663-1293 toll free in B.C. or fax 684-8520

Reader Recommendations:

The Literacy Materials Committee wants to hear about your favorite literacy materials. Please fill out and mail the form on the back of this page.

RECOMMENDED LITERACY MATERIALS REVIEW FORM

Title _____

Author _____

Publisher _____ **Copyright Date** _____

Level (please circle)

*** Basic (0-3)** **** Functional (4-6)** ***** Independent (7-9)**

Please comment briefly on each of these. Feel free to include more information on an additional sheet.

1. Adult oriented? _____
2. Interesting to learners? _____
3. Appropriate to the reading level of learners? _____
4. Successful with learners? _____

   _____
5. Encourages meaningful discussion and critical thinking? _____

   _____
6. Easy to use? _____
7. Free of bias for age, sex, and race? _____
8. Up-to-date? _____
9. Canadian content? _____

Send the completed form to:

Laurie Gould
Basic Education Department
Vancouver Community College (KEC)
1155 East Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1Y8

Recommended by:

_____ (name)

_____ (address)

_____